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No. 5 man for KGB now singing to CIA?

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A highly placed official in the KGB hierarchy is reported to have defected to the West in what may prove to be a far more devastating blow to the Soviet espionage network than the recent defection of the KGB London station chief.

The fifth-ranking officer of the KGB, Vitaly Dzhurtchenko, dropped from sight in Rome on July 24 and is believed to be supplying the CIA with identities of scores of agents and disinformation specialists. This defection, say Western sources, may explain the recent frenzy and turmoil in European espionage circles.

The defection was first reported in the United States in two syndicated columns by Ralph de Toledano, whose articles appear periodically on the Commentary pages of The Washington Times.

His column detailing the significance of Mr. Dzhurtchenko's reported defection appears today on Page 1D.

According to Mr. de Toledano, the sudden disappearance of Mr. Dzhurtchenko, or Jurtchenko as it usually is spelled in the European press, has generated "almost hysterical" inquiries from the KGB to Italian authorities about the missing Soviet agent's whereabouts.

"The Italian Foreign Ministry has blandly replied that he is not in its hands, though it has evaded questions as to its knowledge of where he might be. This has been a tacit

admission that they know of his defection. The logical conclusion is that the CIA has him.

"The reaction of the KGB to Mr. Dzhurtchenko's defection is understandable. In his head, he carried not only the names of top and secondary agents but also a rich knowledge of

the KGB's modus operandi in Western Europe, the United States and Latin America.

"The entire Soviet espionage apparatus is therefore in deep jeopardy and must be rebuilt."

A CIA spokesman in Washington said that it is against agency policy to issue any comments in defection cases, and said that there would be no comment in this instance. No request was made to withhold the story.